

Remarks by Ambassador Al-Jubeir at Religions for Peace reception

October 7, 2010

*Remarks by H.E. Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir
Ambassador of the Kingdom to Saudi Arabia to the U.S.
At the reception for Religions for Peace
To Advance Multi-Religious Cooperation
Saudi Arabian Embassy
Washington, DC
Thursday, October 7, 2010*

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Mohammad and all Prophets and Messengers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. It is a great honor for us to be hosting this gathering tonight in a spirit of dialogue and religious tolerance. Ahlan wa sahan (welcome) to our embassy.

At the outset, I would like to convey the greetings of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, who has been instrumental in launching a global interfaith initiative. The initiative began with a conference in Makkah among Muslim scholars in June of 2008 and continued with the Madrid Conference in July of 2008, which brought together representatives of the world's major religions and cultures. It culminated in the United Nations High Level Meeting of November of 2008, which brought together an unprecedented gathering of heads of states and representatives from throughout the world. Virtually every faith and culture was represented, to emphasize and reinforce the importance of adhering to the universal values that all religions, faiths and cultures share. Since the meeting at the United Nations, there have been a number of conferences and gatherings held in Europe and other places, and a secretariat is being established to make this endeavor permanent. The secretariat will have representatives from the major faiths and religions and its objective is to continue to facilitate the coming together of different religions, cultures and faiths to reinforce the universal message that our creator handed down to us through the various Prophets, Messengers and messages.

I would like to thank Dr. Vendley, Secretary General of Religions for Peace, and Reverend Heckman, for helping make our event this evening possible.

As the world's largest multi-religious organization, Religions for Peace has brought together broad groups of people for a common cause. Your mission is in accord with that of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz—to promote religious tolerance and understanding by focusing on the universal values enshrined in all faiths. It is only by acknowledging and emphasizing our common values that we can make our world a better and more peaceful place.



Ambassador Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir with Nunciature to the US Archbishop Pietro Sambi.

Co-existence and understanding are central pillars in Islam. I would like to quote the following from the Holy Qur'an:

O mankind! We have created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.

As the birthplace of Islam and home to Islam's Two Holy Mosques, Saudi Arabia's government and society are inextricably linked with our religion. Our faith guides our legal system and shapes our culture. It sustains us and gives us strength and character as a nation and as a people.

There is much misunderstanding about Islam in the world today. This is a result of deviants who seek to pervert our faith. Unfortunately, terrorists and extremists have committed or justified criminal acts in the name of all religions. We believe that it is through the emphasis of the universal values enshrined in all faiths – the values of compassion, tolerance, love, mercy, and charity – that we can confront intolerance, bigotry and hatred and contribute to bringing humanity together.

Terrorists and extremists seek to exploit our differences; we must emphasize our common values.

We must reach out and understand each other. We must acknowledge that we all share the same concerns –the breakdown of values, materialism, the disintegration of the family, crime and drug abuse, and a tendency on the part of some to divide rather than

unite. And we must use what is most sacred to us – our respective faiths – to bring us together.

In his speech before the World Conference on Dialogue held in Madrid in July of 2008, The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz made the following important point:

We all believe in one God, who sent messengers for the good of humanity in this world and the hereafter. His will, praise be to Him, was that people should differ in their faiths. If the Almighty had so desired, all mankind would have shared the same religion.

By adhering to the noble principles enshrined in faith, we can overcome adversity and establish peace and justice; we can build bridges of understanding and drown the voices of intolerance.

May God Almighty grant us success as we carry our work beyond these walls.

Thank you and peace be upon you.